

**DELAWARE COMMISSION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 20, 2005**

Members Present: Morris, Ennis, Carroll, Harden, Kitson, Lank, Lardizzone, Magner, Spitzfaden, Thompson, Wasson, and Webb

Members Excused: Endres, Newstadt, and Timberman

Staff Present: Davila

Guests: Richard Citron (VA Medical Center Director), Al Carter (SOS), Jack Houck and Rich Robichard (DELVETS), Ed Moczulski (LP Lo-DEL), Charles Farrell (KWVA), Dave White (DOL), Terry Baker and Tom Daws (VVA), Dr. Ron Sarg (MOAA), Diana Kitson

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Nations Flag.

Chairman Morris opened the meeting by reporting that he had visited the Home construction site and things appear to be going well.

Mr. Moczulski stated that there were no other updates for the Home of the Brave other than the Board meeting to be held that evening. Mr. White reminded everyone of employment services and that he works hand in hand with the VA. He also informed everyone that Norris Townsend is on medical leave and would not be available for at least another four months.

**MOTION BY KITSON TO ACCEPT NOVEMBER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES,  
SECONDED BY HARDEN, MOTION CARRIED.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**CEMETERY COMMITTEE**

Chairman Morris stated that they had received a new schedule last month. Mr. Davila reiterated that they are planning to move to semi-annual Family Advisory Cemetery Committee (FACC) meetings at the Northern Cemetery and the Southern Cemetery as well. The signage is now in place on the wall at the Northern Cemetery, as well as some additional lighting modifications. He continued to discuss the details on other proposed modifications and upgrade projects.

**COMMEMORATIVE AFFAIRS**

No report.

**FINANCE AND LOGISTICS**

No report.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Commissioner Carroll discussed a report provided to the Commissioners updating them on the Veterans Home fund and he reported that the total amount in the fund as of December 19, 2005, was \$156,456.49. Discussion followed. He pointed out that there was no report at the December Steering Committee meeting from the Veterans Home Director about the fact finding trip to Tennessee. He stated that the Veterans Home contractor reported that they are 2 to 3 weeks behind schedule due to the weather, but otherwise everything is going according to plan. Commissioner Carroll stated that there had been a request that the list of items that could be donated be prioritized and possibly added to as construction goes on and that is being worked on. The next Steering Committee meeting will be Wednesday, January 4, 2006 at 2:00 PM. The Dedication Ceremony is scheduled for December 7, 2006, per the Governor. Commissioner Harden is chairing the Dedication Ceremony Committee. Commissioner Carroll reported that there was a plaque and a letter of appreciation presented to the Milford City Council and Chairman Morris reported that they were well received. There was discussion concerning the Home site construction. Commissioner Carroll again brought up the issue of the VA offering space at the hospital for a civilian Hospice.

Mr. Citron explained the situation in reference to the company named Compassionate Care. The company provides inpatient Hospice services and has previously set-up a program at the VA Medical Facility in East Orange, NJ. They have asked the Wilmington VA Hospital if they would be interested in partnering with them. They are looking for a 12-bed unit and were shown space on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of the hospital that is presently being used for administrative services. He felt it would be a good business decision, as it would bring in revenue to the hospital, which would stay at the hospital and allow the VA to better serve their veterans. It could bring in between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year. Since the VA really does not have an inpatient Hospice unit for veterans in the area, this could open up new services not presently available. The Hospice unit would also be used for civilians, but veterans would have priority and receive a discount. Nothing has been approved or signed off on at this time; there are other factors that need to be considered. Mr. Citron clarified that all services and products that the Hospice uses at the VA Hospital would be paid for. Discussion followed. Mr. Davila suggested that a group of Commissioners make a trip to East Orange, NJ, and observe their operation. The suggestion was agreed upon and arrangements will be made for a visit. The VVA expressed their opposition to this idea.

## **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**

Commissioner Thompson reported that they are temporarily on hold and that the attorney for Speaker Spence is studying their proposal regarding the Veterans Home. Commissioner Thompson reported that he will start pushing again after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year, but suspects that the Governor may provide a decision in her State-of-the-State address. Chairman Morris mentioned that Senator Bunting made an appearance at the last Steering Committee and discussed aspects of the running of the Tennessee Home. Chairman Morris also requested that the Veterans Affairs Committee meet more frequently with the Commission.

## **PERSONNEL**

No report.

## **MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS**

No report.

## **HOME DEDICATION**

No report.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

No report.

## **BY-LAWS**

Vice-Chairman Ennis requested that if anyone has an idea or suggestion in reference to changing the By-Laws, let him or a member of the committee know.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**

Wasson (DELVETS) – Reported that DELVETS had their Christmas party and it was very successful.

Harden (WAVES) – Reported that they met for their Christmas meeting and discussed the issue at the VA and they are dead set against having civilians at the VA Hospital.

Webb (VVA) – Mr. Daws reported for Commissioner Webb that the VVA Chapter 83 contacted the Delaware National Guard and requested the name of a family whose significant other is serving in Iraq or Afghanistan, who they could adopt for Christmas. They were given a family and supplied them with \$500 worth of gift cards from various different department and grocery stores. The VVA was contacted by the State Parks Division in Wilmington and was notified that a light post at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial had rusted out and was removed. Through various sources, they were able to raise enough money to replace the lighting at the memorial. With the excess monies raised, they have started a memorial fund that will be used to maintain the memorial in years to come. They will be giving out gift packages to all the patients at the Nursing Home in the VA Hospital. On Christmas Eve they will have their vigil at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial starting at 6:00 PM; everyone is invited to attend. Their Beef and Beer will be in February and Mr. Daws has tickets if anyone wants to attend. They would like to make a donation to WAVES National so that Commissioner Harden can purchase the flags needed for the Cemetery. Mr. Baker wanted to call to the attention of all the service officers and organizations that the individuals coming back from Iraq are being discharged and he feels they are not being compensated appropriately for their disabilities. He asks that everyone try to look out for those individuals coming back.

Ennis – (KWVA) – Reported that they had their Department Holiday party on December 2, 2005, at the Sheraton in Dover. On December 16, 2005, they had their Chapter 1 Holiday party / meeting and he brought up the subject of needing three new flags for the Cemetery and they are being ordered.

Thompson (MCL) – Reported that their annual “Toys for Tots” program is winding down and they feel it was a great success.

Lardizzone (DAV) – Reported that they took care of seven needy families during the months of November and December.

Carroll (MOPH) – Reported that the Department of Delaware attended the Air National Guard 287 Band Christmas Concert on December 6, 2005. A donation in the amount of \$2,500 was made to General Vavala for the Delaware Air National Guard Reserve Emergency Assistance Fund, which was presented by the Department Adjutant, Richard Magner. Pearl Harbor Day Ceremonies held in Newport, DE, were attended by MOPH members. The Sussex County chapter had their annual Christmas party last Saturday and the other chapters are in limbo during the holidays. Members from the Sussex, Kent and New Castle chapters participated in the Millsboro parade and won second place.

Magner (AMVETS) – The next DEC meeting will be in February. The Ancient Hibernians Newark division collected \$1,471 for the Delaware National Guard/Reserve Emergency Assistance Fund.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Chairman Morris researched the meaning of Memorial Day and Veterans Day and printed out copies for all Commissioners.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

None

### **ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Commissioner Lank presented a desktop flag & figurine display to the Commission, which was donated by Ret. Marine Corps Maj. Tom Kelly.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**      **January 24, 2006 (11:00 AM)**

**LOCATION:**                      **Robbins Bldg, 802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100  
Dover, DE**

**ADJOURNED**